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EPA, Marine Industry Associations and MA EOEA Announce Initiative for Cleaner Outboard Motorboat Engines

BOSTON – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's New England Office, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), the Massachusetts Marine Trades Association (MMTA), the Cape Cod Marine Trades Association (CCMTA), the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) and the Marine Retailers Association of America (MRAA) today announced a voluntary initiative to encourage the sale of low-polluting outboard motors and personal watercraft engines in Massachusetts.

The "Get On Board" initiative, modeled after a successful program by the state of New Hampshire and being expanded this year by EPA to the rest of New England, is designed to accelerate the sale of low-pollution two- and four-stroke marine engines which emit substantially less pollution than conventional marine engines. The conventional engines discharge up to 30 percent of their fuel directly into the water and air as pollution.

Under the initiative announced today at the Boston Yacht Haven Marina, all groups, including the MMTA's and CCTA's members, will work to achieve a goal of selling 75 percent clean engines this year in Massachusetts, 80 percent in 2003, and 95 percent by 2004. EPA regulations require that by 2006, all manufacturers' average emissions for new outboard and personal watercraft engines meet low-pollution standards.

"With over 110,000 outboards and personal watercraft registered in Massachusetts, these clean engines represent a great opportunity for boaters to take a big collective bite out of pollution entering the Massachusetts waters," said Robert W. Varney, regional administrator of EPA's New England Office.

All parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding today at a ceremony at the Boston Yacht Haven. Under the agreement, participating retailers in Massachusetts will encourage customers to buy low-polluting engines. MMTA, CCMTA and MRAA will encourage member retailers to participate and MMTA and CCMTA will collect yearly information from members on sales of low-polluting engines, providing state-wide totals to EPA and MA EOEA.

NMMA will work with manufacturers to help ensure a supply of low-polluting engines. EPA New

England will be publicizing the campaign, including creating brochures and signs for display at retail locations; recognizing participating retailers; and monitoring the success of the program. EPA announced a similar program last month in Rhode Island and will be expanding the program in the coming weeks in Maine, Connecticut, and Vermont.

“The MMT Aand its members are proud to endorse this MOU and this initiative for cleaner boats,” said Tom Cox, first vice president, Massachusetts Marine Trades Association. “We recognize that a clean environment and clean waters are part of better boating.”

“Our members our extremely enthusiastic about today’s proposal,” said Peter Way, president of the Cape Cod Marine Trades Association. “It is truly a win/win situation for the boating public as well as for our local waters, particularly in relation to such an environmentally sensitive area as Cape Cod and the Islands.”

“Today, the marine tradesmen of Massachusetts are joining with federal and state environmental agencies in taking a practical step to promote cleaner boat engines that will help reduce pollution of our ocean and inland waterways,” said Bob Durand, secretary of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. “This agreement, aimed at the boating public, joins EOEAs ‘4 the Environment’ program, which helps municipalities buy cleaner boat engines. This partnership can only benefit our environment.”

Massachusetts has over 110,000 registered boats with outboard motors and personal watercraft. Small marine gasoline engines can have a big impact on Massachusetts waterways. Traditional small boat engines are two-stroke carbureted, with up to 30 percent of the fuel passing through the combustion chamber unburned or partially burned, thereby being released directly into the water and air as pollution. This produces airborne hydrocarbon (HC) emissions which contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone or smog. Gasoline discharged to the water elevates concentrations of benzene, MTBE and other toxics in lakes, ponds, and coastal waters.

Current low-pollution marine gasoline engines are either four-stroke or improved, fuel-injected two-stroke engines. Engines meeting EPA low-pollution requirements reduce air pollution by 75 percent or more, lower gasoline discharges to the water, improve fuel efficiency by 35-50 percent, and use up to 50 percent less oil. Other benefits include easier starting, better response, and less smoke and noise. While low-pollution engines cost more initially (15 percent more, typically), EPA estimates that the savings from lower fuel use will more than repay the difference over the life of the engine.

The program in Massachusetts is modeled after a very successful program by the state of New Hampshire, which has three dozen participating dealers, all of which reached 2001's goal of selling 75 percent clean engines.

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